

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Granite Park Middle School
3031 South 200 East
Salt Lake City, Utah 84109**

May 15-16, 2006



**Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Granite Park Middle School
3031 South 200 East
Salt Lake City, Utah 84109**

May 15-16, 2006

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS**

Myron Cottam, Associate Superintendent

**Brett Moulding, Director
Curriculum and Instruction**

**Georgia Loutensock, Accreditation Specialist
Curriculum and Instruction**

Salt Lake City, Utah

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	ii
Utah State Board of Education.....	iii
Granite School District Board of Education and District Administration	1
Granite Park Middle School Administration and Staff.....	2
Granite Park Middle School Mission Statement and Belief Statements.....	4
Members of the Visiting Team	5
Visiting Team Report.....	6
Chapter 1: School Profile.....	6
Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry.....	7
Chapter 2: The Self-Study Process	7
Chapter 3: Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness.....	8
Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals.....	9
Curriculum Development.....	9
Quality Instructional Design	10
Quality Assessment Systems	11
Leadership for School Improvement.....	11
Community Building.....	14
Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning	14
Chapter 4: Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) Standards I-XI.....	15
Chapter 5: School Improvement Efforts – Action Plan	15
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team	17

FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, May 15-16, 2006, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Granite Park Middle School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal John Anderson is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Granite Park Middle School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Granite Park Middle School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

250 East 500 South
P. O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200

District 1

Teresa L. Theurer
66 Canterbury Circle
Logan, UT 84321
Phone: (435) 753-0740

District 6

Tim Beagley
3974 South 3550 West
West Valley City, UT 84119
Phone: (801) 969-6454

District 11

Bill Colbert
14866 Village Vista Dr.
Draper, UT 84020
Phone: (801) 572-1608

District 2

Greg W. Haws
5841 West 4600 South
Hooper, UT 84315
Phone: (801) 985-7980

District 7

Randall A. Mackey
1172 East 100 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84102
Phone: (801) 582-4237

District 12

Mark Cluff
645 West Hubbard Cir
Alpine, UT 84004
Phone: (801) 756-7623

District 3

Edward Dalton
1323 Bryan Road
Erda, UT 84074
Phone: (435) 882-4498

District 8

Janet A. Cannon
5256 Holladay Blvd.
Salt Lake City, UT 84117
Phone: (801) 272-3516

District 13

Thomas Gregory
1056 West 1150 South
Provo, UT 84601
Phone: (801) 607-4702

District 4

Richard Sadler
875 Edgewood Dr.
Ogden, UT 84403
Phone: (801) 479-7988

District 9

Gary C. Swensen
1101 Framewood Ln
Taylorsville, UT 84123
Phone: (801) 281-8746

District 14

Dixie Allen
218 West 5250 North
Vernal, UT 84078
Phone: (435) 789-0534

District 5

Kim R. Burningham
932 Canyon Crest Drive
Bountiful, UT 84010
Phone: (801) 292-9261

District 10

Laurel Brown
5311 South Lucky Clover Ln
Murray, UT 84123
Phone: (801) 261-4221

District 15

Debra G. Roberts
Box 1780
Beaver, UT 84713
Phone: (435) 438-5843

Bonnie Jean Beesley*

1492 East Kristianna Cir.
Salt Lake City, UT 84103
Phone: (801) 359-0295

Sara V. Sinclair*

1340 North 1500 East
Logan, UT 84341-2851
Phone: (435) 754-0216

Patti Harrington

Executive Officer

Twila B. Affleck

Secretary

**Board of Regents Appointments*

9/8/2005

GRANITE SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Patricia Sandstrom	President
Hank Bertoch	Vice President
Connie C. Burgess	Member
Carole E. Cannon	Member
Julene M. Jolley	Member
Sarah R. Meier	Member
Judy Weeks	Member

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Stephen Ronnenkamp	Superintendent
David Garrett	Business Administrator
David Gourley	Support Services Assistant Superintendent
Linda Mariotti	Instructional Services Assistant Superintendent
Kevin Hague	School Services Assistant Superintendent
Paul Sagers	Program Services Assistant Superintendent

GRANITE PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

John A. Anderson..... Principal
Heather Nicholas..... Assistant Principal
Kim Heppler..... Alternative Program Director

Counseling

Dave Hart..... Counselor
Lori Hendry..... Counselor
Tina Creel..... Counselor
Alison Bowers..... Counselor Intern

Support Staff

Annie Baker	Jann Elieson	Stan Parkin
Elaine Beardshall	Elena Estanal	Laura St.Lewis
Marielen Bigby	John Featherstone	Claudia Sundberg
Cherilyn Bramall	Ed Fraley	Kent Taylor
Linda Bryant	James Gorski	Barbara Tillman
Jan Crosby	Dawn Hayes	Jerry Vo
Barbara Davis	Colleen Herron	Connie Zamora
Jessica Deneault	Dennis Iacano	Jane Zamora
Dawnette Dial	Guy Marlowe	Sandra Zamora
Sandra Dunn	Kim McIntyre	
David Durrant	Laura Morris	

Faculty

Nyla Adamson	Sun Christiansen	Sherrie King
Aden Ali	Robert Fiack	Kevin Kingdon
Emily Anderson	Mary Fisher	Keith Lawson
John Anderson	Linda Fugal	Rebecca LeCheminant
Bill Berneau	Joanna Gibb	Anthony Lund
Anita Blevins	Justin Haugen	Andrew Marks
Sally Boland	Larry Hudgins	Mindy McQueen
Barry Bolduc	B.J. Hunter	Michelle Miles
Camille Bushman	Teri Kerner	Dayra Miller

Vera Mock
Amy Morgan
Sherrie Mortensen

Maja Nash
Steve Rossi
Monica Teuscher

Lori Vreeken
Kimberly Wallace
Kimberly Watts

GRANITE PARK MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Success is the only option!

BELIEF STATEMENTS

1. We believe that students should be responsible for solving their own problems with guidance.
2. We believe that students should face logical consequences instead of punishment when possible.
3. We believe that students should be able to have some control over their lives.
4. We believe that students should develop their strengths and understand their weaknesses.
5. We believe that students should learn to be empathetic with themselves and others.
6. We believe that students should learn that problems are opportunities for personal growth.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Edy McGee, Fort Herriman Middle School, Jordan School District, Visiting Team
Co-Chairperson

Deborah Swensen, Brighton High School, Jordan School District, Visiting Team
Co-Chairperson

Darci Barney, Tooele Junior High School, Tooele School District

Shane Farnsworth, Timberline Middle School, Alpine School District

Laurel Harris, Jordan High School, Jordan School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

GRANITE PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Granite Park Middle School is located in the central part of Granite School District in the Salt Lake Valley. It first opened its doors to students on February 13, 1961 (this was at its old location, 450 East 3700 South). Prior to this date, students in the area attended the old Granite Junior High located in part of what is now Granite High School. In June 2001, Granite District decided to move the location of Granite Park to the old Central Junior High building (3031 South 200 East). This building was constructed in 1950 and required much upgrading. Students of Granite Park began the 2001-2002 school year with one working restroom, missing ceiling tiles, and several other unfinished areas. All involved have been making major improvements ever since.

In addition to location, several other changes have occurred at Granite Park. In June 2003, it was decided that Granite Park would start a pilot program for the district. Because middle level philosophies were an important part of Granite District's long-term focus, Granite Park was changed to a 7-8 grade configuration, moving the 9th grade students to Granite High School. Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, Granite Park Middle School will be receiving 9th graders back.

The population of Granite Park Middle School reflects the vast cultural and economic diversity within the community. Economically, the majority of students come from poverty to low-income, single-parent households. The transience rate remains fairly stable, and Granite Park has gone from "Ghetto Park" (lowest test scores, highest failure rate, highest mobility rate, highest safe school and suspension rate) to a nationally ranked "School of Success" (highest gains in test scores, decrease in mobility rate, decrease in suspensions, decrease in truancy issues). The administration and faculty of Granite Park brought about this change as a result of the collaborative development of a mission statement and belief statements, professional development, and increased student learning opportunities.

A large number of additional learning opportunities are available to students at Granite Park Middle School. These include after school tutoring, Saturday school, and summer school. Granite Park Middle School believes its mission statement, "Success is the only option," and bases student promotion on meeting the goals of each department/grade level.

Data included in the self-study reflects a general increase in student achievement over the past four years

- a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

The self-study revealed that Granite Park Middle School has a strong sense of identity. The school recognizes the difficulties it faces, has met them head on, and has developed strategies for overcoming them. Consequently, Granite Park Middle School has created a learner-friendly environment where students can succeed. The data in the self-study is disaggregated by ethnicity, but not by grade level.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

Granite Park Middle School has made considerable effort to gather data on its students. Although this data has been disaggregated by ethnicity, it would be helpful in looking at trends to disaggregate the data by gender and grade level.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Granite Park Middle School has established extraordinarily strong teams. While the administration began the change process, it is these teams of teachers who are responsible for the culture of the school changing from a school where failure was expected to one where success is the only option. This effort needs to be reflected in the profile.
- Develop the action plan to create a seamless transition from student goals to teacher behavior to intended outcomes.
- The school is meeting the needs of its unique population through classroom assessment (“walkaways”). To meet the issues and challenges of NCLB, the school needs to develop an alignment of state assessments (CRTs) with its own formative assessments.
- Explore the correlation between improved attendance and student achievement.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The Visiting Team found that the faculty and administration served on interdisciplinary focus groups and committees. Both parents and students were invited, but were unable to make it to meetings.

The collaborative process between the faculty and administration is highly successful at Granite Park Middle School and has produced a teamed middle school structure that is committed to the process of student of student achievement. The Visiting Team recognized that the school and leadership have worked extensively to make a thorough analysis of the school, and commends them for their effort and hard work.

The Visiting Team commends the faculty and administration for their insight and for taking the initiative to make changes at Granite Park Middle School, and recommends that stakeholder inclusion remain a vital part of the philosophy of the school community. The Visiting Team also encourages the continued courting of other stakeholders, including classified support staff within the school.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

Granite Park Middle School knows its strength and weaknesses. These are reflected in the written report of the self-study, and were also reflected in the conversations that the Visiting Team had with administrators, faculty, and students. The Visiting Team was impressed with the level of commitment of the administration and faculty. An area of concern for the Visiting Team was that the support staff seems to have been left out of the self-study process. Adding this important group will provide more strength to the commitment that the school has to provide opportunities for all of its students to succeed.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Granite Park Middle School's desired results for student learning are as follows:

1. **Effective Communication:** Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening
2. **Resourceful Thinker:** Skills, Knowledge, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking
3. **Responsible Citizen:** Integrity, Respect for Self and Others, Richness of Education, Cross-Cultural Understanding

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The Visiting Team found convincing evidence that a collaborative process was used for the development of the mission statement. As the Visiting Team spoke with the administration and faculty, it became obvious that the school believes its mission statement (“Success is the only option”) and is focusing on making this a reality for each student.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

Granite Park Middle School’s belief statements address the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success. The Visiting Team found evidence of each of the belief statements in the practice of the school. Although the students could not verbalize the belief statements per se, they permeated the way the students spoke about their school, their teachers, and their learning.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The Visiting Team found that the school’s DRSLs are general. While there is an understanding of the specific goals for student learning through the school’s “walkaways,” and the school’s mission and belief statements align with them, the same alignment does not exist with the DRSLs. The DRSLs reflect the Utah Life Skills as adopted by the Utah Board of Education, but have remained general in their development. The Visiting Team recommends that the school define the DRSLs using the “walkaways” as a guide.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

Three years ago, the departments of Granite Park Middle School developed “walkaways.” These are aligned with the Utah Core Curriculum, and are the items which the students must master before being promoted to the next grade. Multiple opportunities are provided for all students to relearn the material they have not mastered. Once it is mastered, the student is allowed to proceed.

Within the departmental analyses of the written self-study, there is evidence that the Utah Life Skills are addressed. Each department listed the multiple ways it addresses communication, critical thinking, and responsible citizenship.

Although the “walkaways” provide an excellent way to monitor the progress of each student, these “walkaways” need to be pushed up to the level of the whole school. Expanding this program will result in true desired results for student learning.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

Although there is clear evidence that this school thrives on teaming and collaboration, the DRSLs are so vague and general that they are not driving curriculum development. Rather, the “walkaways” are the force behind curriculum development. It appeared to the Visiting Team that the DRSLs were an afterthought and were developed only to meet the needs of the accreditation format.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

The school uses a wide variety of strategies and learning activities which are aligned with the State Core. “Walkaways” are used to design what is being taught and to assess student learning. It was evident from visiting the classrooms that the teachers are trying to reach every student they come in contact with, and they seem to have an excellent rapport with the students while teaching.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

This school has a wide variety of cultural differences that have been addressed. The school is a Title I school, so if a student is struggling the school can pull the student out and help him or her where the help is needed. The teachers are either already ESL endorsed or working on their endorsements.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Every teacher in the school uses “walkaways” to determine what students are learning and how they are learning. This provides a way for the teacher to decide

whether the students understand the information or whether the information needs to be re-taught. If a student has an incomplete grade or is failing a class, he or she may attend after school, Saturday school, or summer school to make up those grades.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

Classroom assessments have been developed by the staff at varying levels depending on the teacher and subject area. These classroom assessments are based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement (Granite Park's "walkaways"). School-wide summative assessments exist in the form of end-of-level CRTs and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills; however, more work could be done to create subject-specific school-wide formative assessments that would inform and shape the staff's instructional practices.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

The staff uses a variety of assessments ranging from formal, objective measures (i.e., tests) to informal, subjective measures (i.e., interviews) of student learning. These assessments are based on the walkways and the State Core Curriculum. In addition, the Math and English Departments are using the YPP assessment program, which is based on both state and national performance standards.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

The staff's practice of differentiating both informal and formal assessments allows students to demonstrate competency in multiple ways, which should lead to fair and equitable practices. The staff has developed rubrics that also contribute to unbiased assessment of student learning. "Walkaways" establish fair and clearly articulated expectations for student achievement.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

There is overwhelming evidence that the staff and administration have assumed the responsibility of leadership in an effort to improve student learning. The administration and teaching staff have assumed the leadership role by providing

professional development opportunities for their colleagues. Examples of this include professional development offered in integration of technology and the classroom through the teachers' lab, collaborative and team training, ESL training for all faculty members, and literary cadres. Additionally, the Visiting Team observed that each academic team has a counselor and administrator who works with them to provide additional support. The Visiting Team encourages an ongoing focus on best practices for all staff members, with follow-up staff development sessions for existing faculty and new faculty. The Visiting Team also encourages the administration and faculty to continue their efforts to involve their parent community and school support staff in the effort to improve student learning.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The leadership of Granite Park Middle School has gone to great lengths to use data to employ data-driven, research-based decision-making. The school has reported student achievement through CRT scores, but is employing other assessments for student level placement and curriculum decisions. The other assessment programs include YPP and individual team "walkaways" classroom assessments.

The Visiting Team recommends that the data from all assessments be brought together and utilized to refine and improve the action plan to improve student achievement. Additionally, as the school has identified that attendance has an impact on successful student achievement, it is suggested that the leadership at the school continue to extend and refine its data collection efforts in this area.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

Granite Park Middle School is utilizing disaggregated data to determine who is learning and who is not learning. Currently, standardized tests and classroom observations are used to determine effective instructional practices. The school is involved in developing consistent assessment across their "walkaways" in each department. Teams meet in a common planning period to reflect on student achievement and behavior. Teachers work to make students accountable through the "walkaways" program. Additionally, the students receive an "I" if they have not achieved the necessary knowledge of a concept, and each student must make up that grade through Saturday school, after school tutoring, or summer school sessions. Underachieving students are given extra support through after school tutoring, Saturday school sessions, meetings with counselors, two SEOP meetings each year, and reward activities (Success Club and the receiving of a "fast pass" for admittance to special activities). The school has also collected data on attendance and tardiness. Granite Park Middle School should continue to develop

and utilize benchmark assessment systems to evaluate student achievement and progress and to determine the correlation between program implementation and improved student learning.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The Visiting Team found consistent praise of the school leadership from the faculty. It is clear that the school administrators are student and teacher advocates and work tirelessly to ensure student success. Close attention is paid to the climate and culture of the school. Policies and practices are typically consistent with the school's mission and are designed to maximize opportunities for successful learning. The allocation of resources is aligned to both the school and department goals. The leadership has established the foundation for collaborative decision making and will continue to seek input from faculty.

The Visiting Team did notice that the makeup of the focus groups mirrored that of the different teams rather than a cross-section of all the teams on each focus group. To better facilitate a school-wide assessment in key areas, the Visiting Team encourages the leadership to differentiate the makeup of the focus groups. The team also encourages the school leadership to seek the input from parental, student, and classified stakeholders.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The faculty expresses appreciation of the administrators who attend to school needs and support school goals. Valuable resources have been allocated to achieve school goals. Besides district-allocated resources, the school has obtained additional federal resources through federal monies (21st Century grant, Gear Up Grant, and Title I funds).

The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to use resources to align data and "walkaways" to the DRSLs and action plan for a streamlined process.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The Visiting Team found overwhelming evidence that the school leadership has ensured that the faculty has been extensively involved. While all aspects of the accreditation report were run through the School Community Council, only one member of the community has been willing to serve on that committee. The Visiting Team also found strong evidence that the school leadership has

encouraged and is continuing to encourage the community and parents to be involved in the decision-making process. The school leadership recognizes the need to improve communication with the community, and has identified as a primary part of the action plan the need to refine the school's communication structures in order to empower all stakeholders.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

This school has struggled to get the community involved with education; however, it has started to improve by personally inviting parents to attend parent-teacher conferences, providing child care at parent-teacher conferences, and providing food at different times during the year. The school also has interpreters so that teachers can communicate with parents.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The faculty realizes that this is a need, and rather than bringing the community to the school they are taking the school out to the community to make parents aware of the programs and help that are available. They have hired personnel to establish an outreach program to get all students and families involved. They have also worked closely with law enforcement by hiring an additional officer to monitor the school to ensure a safer learning environment.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The school's organizational culture supports school improvement initiatives and professional development. The school's flexibility and enthusiasm are reflected in the faculty buy-in and determination to keep what works and discard what doesn't. The staff members are actively involved in staff development based on their own needs and desires. Currently ongoing professional development includes reading strategies, Teaching with Love and Logic, ESL training, teaching on the block, the use of "walkaways," classroom management, the use of technology, the Six Traits of Writing, literary cadres, teacher observations, and summer retreats for incoming teachers. In addition, the team meetings collaborate on instruction.

Grants such as Title I, Gear Up and 21st Century support a variety of staff development programs and will provide funding for several years. Mentoring for new teachers and summer retreats provide a continuation of teacher improvement.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The culture at Granite Park Middle provides strong support for professional development and school improvement. It is evident that the school administration fully supports the faculty, and encourages faculty members to experiment with new strategies. There is a strong desire to do what is best for students with a culture of possibilities. The school has created unique strategies for a unique population. The daily collaboration fosters the self-analysis process, culling and expanding on what works. The Visiting Team commends this commitment and the attention given to meeting the academic and social needs of the school's diverse student population.

It is recommended that the DRSLs be more fully developed and aligned with the beliefs and mission statement for a school-wide focus and team goals. It is also recommended that the school continue working to increase community involvement.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Most Utah public junior high /middle schools are not accredited through NAAS, but only by the USOE—it is their choice to join NAAS or not. Granite Park Middle School is a 7-8 school, and therefore not a member of NAAS.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

An action plan should reflect the mission and beliefs of the school and be a strategic approach to accomplish the desired results for student learning (DRSLs) and address the critical areas of follow-up as determined by the school through the accreditation process.

The Visiting Team commends Granite Park Middle School for the fine work that is being accomplished toward these ends; however, the action plan reflects only what has been or is currently being done. In order to maintain a climate of continuous improvement in the school, a clearly articulated action plan should identify future direction and a specific timeline to accomplish goals.

The action plan does not specifically address the school's articulated focus.

Since the accreditation document was printed, changes in the district have identified for the school the critical area of integrating the 9th grade into the existing structures and programs of the school. The Visiting Team found that the administration, faculty, and staff are addressing this area and recommends that the integration of the 9th graders become part of the action plan.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The DRSLs should shape the action plan. Although there is a school-wide commitment to "walkaways," the Visiting Team has not found a similar commitment to the DRSLs.

It is recommended that the "walkaways" be a reflection of the DRSLs. If "walkaways" are aligned with the DRSLs a greater school-wide commitment to the action plan will result.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

An action plan and a sound process for follow-up to the plan should be measurable. The timeline should list specific steps to be taken and estimated dates of completion. The timeline for implementation in the Granite Park Middle School action plan is not specific. In addition, a clear method of assessment and evaluation has not been articulated in the action plan. The DRSL goals of effective communication, resourceful thinkers, and responsible citizens, as presently stated, are difficult to measure and assess. Several of the items in the communication column are elements of evaluation rather than action steps. Consequently, following up on the process the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan will be difficult as well.

In conclusion, the action plan does not clearly articulate a vision for improving student learning or addressing critical areas for follow-up.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Granite Park Middle School for its dedication to student success. There is overwhelming evidence that the faculty has tremendous buy-in for the programs implemented to improve student success.
- The Visiting Team commends Granite Park Middle School for its successful implementation of teaming. These teams not only are consistent with the middle level philosophy, but they have become the strength of the curriculum and instructional practices of the school. They also provide a great support system for the students and student achievement. Granite Park Middle School needs to continue its use of the teams.
- The Visiting Team commends Granite Park Middle School for the care and concern it gives to every student. In many ways, Granite Park Middle School has become a hero in the lives of these at-risk students.
- The Visiting Team commends Granite Park Middle School's increase in student achievement scores. In addition to the increase in scores, this school has changed its climate from a culture of failure to a culture of success. The Visiting Team recognizes the concerted effort made by administration, faculty, and staff in order for these changes to occur.
- The Visiting Team commends Granite Park Middle School for its openness and willingness to change in order to provide an opportunity for every student to be successful.
- The Visiting Team commends this faculty and staff for their ability to share leadership with the administration in order to enable successful programs to continue in spite of changes in administration.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that focus groups diversify so that the findings of each focus group are reflective of the entire school.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the mission statement, belief statements, DRSLs, and action plan be aligned. The "walkaways" (the current curriculum design and assessment program) need to be a reflection of the overarching learning outcomes (DRSLs) Granite Park wants for all students to have as they leave the school.

- Granite Park Middle School has successfully developed strong, effective interdisciplinary teams. The Visiting Team recommends that the school begin to strengthen the role of its departments. Effective departments will, in turn, strengthen teams and will lead to increased student achievement.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Granite Park Middle School include all the data it uses for student placement and determining student achievement in the school profile of its self-study. Furthermore, the Visiting Team recommends that professional development be provided for the teachers so that they have a better understanding of the role that formative as well as summative data play in curriculum development and instruction.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Granite Park Middle School articulate its direction and goals in terms of student achievement.